AN EARNEST

EXHORTATION

FROM

A Minister

TO HIS

PARISHIONERS,

To Discharge the DUTY of

Morning

AND

Evening Prayer

IN THEIR

FAMILIES.

WITH A

Collection of PRAYERS suited to those two SEASONS.

WORCESTER: Printed by *S. Bryan.*

An Exhortation to Family PRAYER.

ALTHO' Prayer in Our Families is a Duty that we owe to Almighty God, and is both reaſonable in it ſelf, and highly advantagious to us, yet 'tis to be feared that there are too many Families amongſt us, who are fallen into ſuch a thoughtleſs State, as to go on in a daily Neglect of it. That you may not perſevere in this Sin (which is the Occaſion of many other) for want of Arguments to diſwade you from it, or for want of Helps to enable you to Diſcharge it as you ought, I have put this ſmall Book into your Hand; and that God may make it Effectual to perſwade and aſſiſt you to Diſcharge this Duty which is ſo Advantagious to your Souls, is the Prayer of him who ſincerely and heartily wiſheth their Salvation.

BRITISH MUSEUM

To make you ſenſible of the Benefit of Praying to God in your Family, I deſire you to conſider,

Firſt, The many Dangers to which we are Expoſed, and that we cannot by our own Skill or Strength avoid them. The Body is liable to a hundred Diſeaſes, and many Accidents as Fatal; and the Soul to infinite Temptations from the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil; and the only Security we have againſt Dangers, is God's Providence, and againſt Temptation, the Aſſiſtance of his Grace; which, becauſe we daily want, we muſt daily pray for, and

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'tis great Encouragement for us to do ſo. 2dly Becauſe Chriſt hath promiſed his Preſence with us, *Mat* 18. 19, 20. *Where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midſt of them.* He will be always ready to hear and aſſiſt the Prayers of good Men, in what Place, or at what time ſoever they are made, more eſpecially when they are ſent up with united Hearts and Souls.

A Third Encouragement to Family Prayers is, that it promotes Religion in them; for no Member thereof can wholly forget God, and another World, while they are every Day reminded of both in Prayer. Children are hereby trained up from their Infancy in a Habit of Devotion; and Servants have an Opportunity of ſerving God their great Maſter every Day, and by this means Parents and Maſters Diſcharge God's ſtrict Command, of bringing up their Children and Servants in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; hereby they Plant in their Hearts, a true ſenſe of Piety and Devotion; and they, when they come to be Parents and Maſters, will teach their Children and Servants the ſame.

There is a general Complaint (and I would to God there were no reaſon for it) that the Age we now live in, is moſt abominably Wicked; that there is not only a Decay of Chriſtian Piety, but Mens Hearts are ſet upon Wickedneſs; and though we may wiſh and Pray for a Reformation of Manners, yet it cannot be expected till we and our Families keep the

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Lord's-Day more Holy, and till we ſet up in our Families, conſtant Morning and Evening Prayer, for by this means the Spirit of Religion will be tranſmitted at leaſt to the Generations to come. *4thly*, Family-Prayers are a great Check to all the vicious Members in them, for they will put them in mind, that there is a God and another World; and that thoſe who Expect to be happy hereafter, muſt daily beg of God that they may live Holy Lives whilſt they are here. This is the great End and Deſign of all our Prayers.

And although Perſons who have long continued in a Habit of Sin, may not heartily join with their more pious Brethren, yet they will be thereby put in mind, that where daily Prayers are continued in a Family, it is in order to preſerve them from Dangers and Temptations, and to ſecure their everlaſting Happineſs, after the Troubles and Miſeries of this Life are ended; and they may be brought ſometime or other to believe, that 'tis not ſafe for them to continue in thoſe Sins which they hear their Fellow Chriſtians Pray ſo heartily againſt every Day, that God would deliver them from. The Sermons of Miniſters are through Prejudice, Careleſsneſs, and Hardneſs of Heart, ſoon forgotten: But when the Thoughts of God and another World are thus daily renew'd in their daily Prayers, they will be ſome Check to the wicked Inclinations, and wicked Courſes of deſperate Sinners; and I queſtion not but many of them have been reſtrain'd,

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and ſome reform'd from their Wickedneſs, by living in ſuch Families where daily Prayers have been kept up.

Fifthly, As Family-Prayers are thus uſeful to reform the bad Members of it, ſo are they an Excellent Means of Confirming thoſe that are good, and to cauſe them to perſevere and grow in Grace, and ſo to fit them more and more for Glory.

The Hearts of Men are generally inclin'd to what is Evil, and averſe to what is Good; they are daily expoſed to the Temptations of the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, and too apt to be Overcome by them; and therefore God hath made it our conſtant Work to watch and ſtrive againſt them. For the doing of this Effectually, he hath enjoyn'd Reading and Meditating on his Holy Word, and more eſpecially daily Prayer; for this Duty will be of the greateſt Advantage to us, as it tends to awaken our Care and Diligence in the Buſineſs of Religion; and as it does (if 'tis ſincerely Perform'd) effectually engage the Divine Aſſiſtance to ſecond our Care and Endeavours, and ſecure them from Miſcarriage, and without the aid of God's Spirit, and his Bleſſing upon our Endeavours, they will be ineffectual, and ſignify nothing; and this aid is not to be obtain'd without Prayer. 'Tis this which invites this bleſſed Gueſt into our Souls, and cauſeth him to enter in and dwell there, and to make us more hearty and ſucceſsful in our Endeavours after that Holineſs, without which we cannot ſee God.

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And ſince our daily Prayers contain in them Confeſſion of our Sins, if we pray with Underſtanding, and ſo as to mind what we are doing, they will put us under a Neceſſity of daily Examination, by which our Repentance will keep Peace with our Tranſgreſſion, we ſhall have a better Knowledge of our Spiritual State, and we ſhall be better prepar'd to render up our Accounts when God doth call for them.

Sixthly, By keeping up daily Prayers in our Families, we ſhall more readily, and more devoutly attend upon the Publick Service in the Church, where all good Chriſtians are oblig'd to meet on the Lord's day, with united Hearts, *to render thanks for thoſe Benefits which we have received at his Hands, to ſet forth his moſt worthy Praiſe, to hear his moſt holy Word, and to ask thoſe things that are requiſite and neceſſary, as well for the Body as the Soul.* For 'tis the ſame Spirit of Devotion that doth make us fit both for Publick and Private Prayer, and happy is that Soul who takes care to keep it up, and will not ſuffer it to fall and languiſh, as moſt certainly it will do for want of daily Exerciſe; This is too evident amongſt the poorer ſort of People, who having ſtupidly omitted the Duty of Prayer in their own Houſe, proceed at laſt to a total Neglect of it in God's.

Nor hath this Neglect of Family-Prayer, only had this unlucky Influence on the Poor, as to make them neglect Publick Prayer; but it hath had almoſt as bad a one upon thoſe who

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are of better understanding, and better ability, for some of them being strangers to the devout Performance of Prayers in their Families upon week days, they do not perform it with that Spirit which they ought upon Sundays, for their Hearts are cold, and their thoughts, as well as their Eyes, are wandering.

Seventhly. In order to promote Prayers in your Families, let me desire you to consider that dreadful imprecation upon those Families which are Prayerless *Jer.* 10 25. *Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not, and upon the Families that have not called upon thy Name.* This Curse hath entred in a visible manner upon many Prayerless Families, whom God in his Judgment hath given up to a reprobate Sense, and vile Affections, to commit all Uncleanness with greediness, and fall from one Wickedness to another, without any stop or restraint: O let the dread of this Judgment prevail with you to set up Prayers in your Families, that so you may prevent its falling on them.

Lastly, Let us consider that there are terrible Days which will come, and altho' our Prayers cannot prevent them, yet by the constant and devout Exercise of Prayer, we shall be better prepar'd for them; and therefore our blessed Saviour doth most earnestly exhort his Disciples to this holy Exercise, *Luke* 21. 34, 35, 36. *Take heed to your selves least at any time your hearts be overcharged with Surfeitings and Drunkenness, and the cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon you unawares, for as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the Earth; watch ye therefore and Pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.* So that watching and praying are the best Preparation against all evil Days that may come, but more especially our greatest Support, at those most terrible Days of Death and Judgment which certainly will come.

There are two Excuses which Men generally make, for their omitting this Duty, which I shall shew the Weakness and Insufficiency of.

First. The want of Time.

Secondly. The want of Ability to perform it.

First. As for the want of time to perform it, I beg you to consider, whether 'tis not very unmannerly, as well as very

very ſinful, to anſwer God when he calls you to Prayers, *I will come when I have nothing elſe to do.* And how would you take ſuch an Anſwer from your Child or your Servant? Beſides, you cannot ſpend any part of your Time better than in Prayer, becauſe that time which is thus ſpent, will turn to your greateſt Advantage, both in reſpect of this Life and another. For, as it procures God's Bleſſing upon you, it will be a means of making you proſper in the World more than all your other Labours can, without it; and as it will promote the good of your Souls in the ſeveral reſpects before-mention'd, 'twill turn to your higheſt and moſt unſpeakable benefit hereafter. Beſides, the Prayers that are here recommended to you, will take up ſo very little time, that it cannot be any conſiderable hindrance to thoſe that work hardeſt, and have moſt Buſineſs to do. And I am ſure no Man ought ſo to imploy his time for the Service of his Body, as utterly to neglect his Soul. And I am afraid there are many who every day ſpend more time than this Duty does require, much worſe. And I earneſtly beg you to conſider, how little this Excuſe can avail with God Almighty, when at the ſame time you make it, your own Conciences muſt tell you that 'tis not true. As for the

Second hindrance of this Duty of Prayer, that you want Ability to perform it as you ought, I have for your aſſiſtance collected the following Prayers out of the *Common-Prayer Book*, and the Prayer for Grace, out of *the whole Duty of Man*, and if you offer them up to God, as our Church directs, with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart, they will be an acceptable Morning and Evening Sacrifice to Him.

May all thoſe for whoſe uſe this ſhort Exhortation to Family-Prayer is Printed, read it often and conſider it ſeriouſly as a matter that Concerns the Good of their Souls, and may as many as have not ſet up this Godly Practice in their Families, put on a Reſolution to begin it this Day, and not any longer neglect that Duty which conduceth ſo much to promote the Glory of God, and the Salvation of their Children and Servants Souls, as well as of their own.

Prayers for MORNING.

LOrd we know not what to pray for as we ought: O let thy bleſſed Spirit, help our

Infirmities, and keep us from all cold desires, and wandering Thoughts, from Impenitence, Uncharitableness, and hardness of Heart, and whatsoever may make them unacceptable to thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

ALmighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent, create in us new and contrite Hearts, that we worthily lamenting our Sins, and acknowledging our Wretchedness, may obtain of thee the God of all Mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

ALmighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable Sinners. Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults; Restore thou them that are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And Grant, O most merciful Father for his sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life; to the glory of thy holy Name. *Amen.*

O Lord we beseech thee to hear our Prayers; and spare all those who confess their Sins unto thee; That they whose Consciences

ſciences by Sin are accuſed by thy merciful Pardon, may be abſolved, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, who art the Author of Peace, and Lover of Concord, in Knowledge of whom ſtandeth our eternal Life, whoſe Service is perfect Freedom; Defend us thy humble Servants in all Aſſaults of our Enemies, that we ſurely truſting in thy Defence, may not fear the Power of any Adverſaries, through the Might of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

O Lord our Heavenly Father, Almighty and Everlaſting God, who haſt ſafely brought us to the beginning of this day; Defend us in the ſame by thy mighty Power, and grant that this day we fall into no Sin, neither run into any kind of Danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy Governance, to do always that is righteous in thy ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

ALmighty and everlaſting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we deſire, or deſerve; pour down upon us the abundance of thy Mercy, forgiving us thoſe things whereof our Conſcience is afraid, and giving us thoſe good things, which we are not worthy to ask, but through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

O Lord, who haſt taught us, that Fleſh and Blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; Give us Grace we beſeech thee, ſo to ſubdue all its ſinful Motions and

Suggeſtions

Suggeſtions, that we may wholly ſubmit to the Guidance of thy holy Spirit; and forſaking all worldly and carnal Affections, may be evermore ready to follow thy holy Commandments, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

O God the Creator and Preſerver of all Mankind, we humbly beſeech thee for all ſorts and conditions of men, that thou wouldſt be pleaſed to make thy ways known unto them, thy ſaving health unto all Nations. More eſpecially we pray for the good eſtate of the Catholick Church, that it may be ſo guided and govern'd by thy good Spirit, that all who profeſs and call themſelves Chriſtians, may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of ſpirit, in the bond of Peace, and in righteouſneſs of Life. Finally, we commend to thy Fatherly goodneſs all thoſe who are any ways afflicted or diſtreſſed in mind, body, or eſtate, that it may pleaſe thee to comfort and relieve them according to their ſeveral neceſſities, giving them patience under their ſufferings, and a happy iſſue out of all their Afflictions. And this we beg for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake. *Amen.*

ALmighty God, Father of all Mercies, we thine unworthy ſervants do give thee moſt humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodneſs and loving kindneſs to us and to all men. We bleſs thee for our Creation, Preſervation, and all the bleſſings of this Life, but above all for thine ineſtimable love in the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;

Chriſt; for the means of Grace, and for the hope of glory. And we beſeech thee give us that due ſenſe of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may ſhew forth thy praiſe, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourſelves to thy ſervice, and by walking before thee in holineſs and righteouſneſs all our days, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom with thee and the holy Ghoſt, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

ALmighty God, who haſt promiſed to hear the petitions of them that ask in thy Son's Name; We beſeech thee mercifully to incline thine ear to us who have made now our prayers and ſupplications unto thee; and grant that thoſe things which we have faithfully asked according to thy will, may effectually be obtain'd, to the relief of our neceſſities, and to the ſetting forth of thy glory, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

OUR *Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.* Amen.

THE Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the fellowſhip of the holy Ghoſt be with us all this day and ever. *Amen.*

EVEN

EVENING PRAYER.

LOrd we know not what to pray for as we ought: O let thy bleſſed Spirit help our infirmities, and keep us from all cold Deſires and wandering Thoughts, from all Hardneſs of Heart, Impenitence and Uncharitableneſs, and whatſoever may make our Prayers unacceptable to thee, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

ALmighty God, Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; we acknowledge and bewail our manifold ſins and wickedneſs, which we from time to time moſt grievouſly have committed by Thought, Word and Deed againſt thy divine Majeſty, provoking moſt juſtly thy wrath and indignation againſt us. We do earneſtly repent, and are heartily ſorry for our Miſ-doings; the Remembrance of them is grievous to us, the burden of them is intollerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, moſt merciful Father, for thy Son our Lord Jeſus Chriſts ſake, forgive us all that is paſt, and grant that we may ever hereafter ſerve and pleaſe thee in newneſs of life, to the honour and glory of thy Name, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

OMoſt gracious God, who doſt ſo put away the ſins of all them that truly repent, that thou remembreſt them no more. Open thine Eye of Mercy upon us thy Servants, who moſt earneſtly deſire pardon and forgiveneſs; renew in us moſt loving Father whatſoever hath been decayed by the fraud and malice of the Devil, or by our own carnal Will and Frailneſs, keep

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us in the unity of thy Church, and make us li
ving members of the ſame; accept our repen
tance, and impute not unto us our former ſins
ſtrengthen our Faith, and confirm us in al
goodneſs, and keep us in the ſame by thy Grace
and bring us to everlaſting Life, through Jeſu
Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, from whom all holy deſires, all good
Counſels, and all juſt Works do proceed
Give unto thy ſervants that peace which the
world cannot give, that both our hearts may be
ſet to obey thy Commandments, and alſo that by
thee we being defended from the fear our ene
mies, may paſs our time in reſt and quietneſs
through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt our Savi
our. *Amen.*

O Lord, who haſt taught us, that all our do
ings without Charity, are nothing worth
ſend thy holy Ghoſt, and pour into our heart
that moſt excellent gift of Charity, the ver
bond of Peace, and of all Vertues; withou
which, whoſoever liveth is accounted dead be
fore thee. Grant this for thine only Son, Jeſu
Chriſt's ſake. *Amen.*

ALmighty God, we are taught by thy hol
Word, that the hearts of Kings are in th
rule and governance, receive our Prayers for th
Servant *George* ſet over us by thy graciousPro
vidence to be our King; and ſo together wit
him, bleſs *George* Prince of *Wales*, and all th
Royal Family, with the dew of thy heavenl
Spirit, that they ever truſting in thy goodneſ
protected by thy Power, and Crowned by th
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gracious and endleſs Favour, may continue before thee in Health, Peace, Joy and Honour, a long and happy life upon Earth, and after death obtain everlaſting life and glory in the Kingdom of Heaven, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

O Moſt gracious Lord God, from whom every good and perfect Gift cometh, we wretched Creatures, that are not able of our ſelves, ſo much as to think a good thought, beſeech thee to work in us both to will and do according to thy good pleaſure. Inlighten our minds that we may know thee, and let us not be barren or unfruitful in that knowledge: Lord, work in our hearts a true Faith, a purifying hope, and an unfeigned love towards thee, give us a full truſt on thee, zeal for thee, reverence of all things that relate to thee; make us fearful to offend thee, thankful for thy mercies, humble under thy Corrections, devout in thy Service, ſorrowful for our ſins, and grant that in all things we may behave our ſelves ſo as befits Creatures to their Creator, and Servants to their Lord. Enable us likewiſe to perform that Duty which we owe to our ſelves; give us that meekneſs, humility, and contentedneſs, whereby we may always poſſeſs our ſouls in patience and thankfulneſs; make us diligent in all our duties, and perfectly pure and temperate. Make us alſo to be ſo affected towards our Neighbour, that we may never tranſgreſs that royal Law of thine, of loving him as our ſelves; grant us exactly to perform all parts of Juſtice, yielding to all whatſoever by any kind of right becomes their

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due, and give us ſuch bowels of mercy and compaſſion, that we may never fail to do all acts of charity to all men, whether Friends or Enemies, according to thy command and example. Finally, we beſeech thee, O Lord, to ſanctify us throughout, that our whole ſpirit, and ſoul and body, may be preſerved blameleſs, to the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to whom with thee, and the holy Ghoſt, be all honour and glory. *Amen.*

O Lord we thank thee for the mercies of the day paſt, and humbly beſeech thee to watch over us this Night, and preſerve us and all that belongs to us from Sin and Danger. And becauſe we know neither the Day nor hour of our Maſters coming, grant us grace that we may be always ready; and that we may never live in ſuch a ſtate as we ſhall be afraid to die, but may take care ſo to live, that we may die unto the Lord.

Our Father, which art in Heaven; Hallowed be thy Name. &c.

ALmighty God, who haſt given us Grace at this time with one accord to make our common Supplications unto thee, and doſt promiſe, that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name, thou wilt grant their Requeſts; fulfil now, O Lord, the Deſires and Petitions of thy Servants as may be moſt expedient for us; granting us in this World Knowledge of thy Truth, and in the World to come Life everlaſting. *Amen.*

The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, &c.

FINIS.